THEY ARE EMPLOYABLE

By Marie E. Frampton

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HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

General Federation Clubwoman, V. 28, No. 5, May, 1948.
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# They Are Employable

**By Merle E. Frampton, Ph.D., LL.D., Litt.D.**

*Principal, N. Y. Institute for the Education of the Blind*
*Vice Chairman, President's Committee on Employ the Physically Handicapped*

*Blinded by a Jap bomb blast, Walter G. McMullen, 26 year old Maine veteran, returned to his old paper, the Bangor Daily Commercial, where he writes his stories on a typewriter transcribing his notes from a Braille card at his left on desk.*

Recently, a friend who has been crippled since childhood with infantile paralysis visited our home. Our youngest, long since familiar with the strong-limbed blind boys and girls, was puzzled by the braces, the cane and the limp. Addressing my friend, she asked: "Is it fun to be a cripple? You are always laughing."

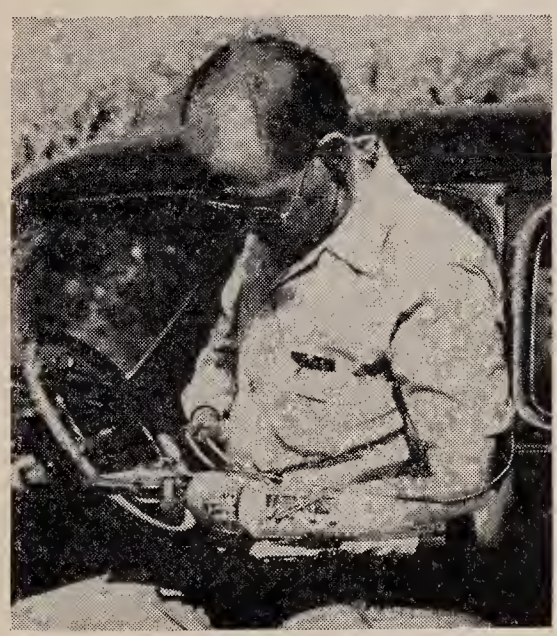
I have thought a lot about that remark, made in the innocence of childhood. And I know that what gives my friend the ability to laugh and to bear her handicap is the inner satisfaction of being a personality, of holding her own position and of being known and respected for the job she is doing.

A club woman herself, this associate has been able to focus the attention of her own organization upon the rehabilitation and employment problems of the handicapped. What she has done lies within the power of any interested woman who belongs to one of the 17,000 Federation clubs.

Delving into the realm of mathematics for a moment it is easy to see what a tremendous influence Federation members could have if each club would take steps to secure one job for a handicapped man or woman. During the month of October, 1947, much of the effort of the United States Employment Service and its 1,800 local offices throughout the States was devoted to placing handicapped workers. With the help of veterans organizations, business and industry, as well as many civic and professional groups, 17,802 disabled veterans were placed in jobs, almost one job per woman's club!

Although women may not control the hiring and firing in industry, they do have great influence with the men who formulate and operate employment policies and they do have at their disposal many jobs in the trades, in the professions, in stores and smaller offices. And, here also, women, the wives, sisters, daughters and sweethearts, can make their ideas and their logic felt in employment matters.

There is no place for charity in this program of employment of the handicapped. The program would soon wipe out businesses conducted on that basis. And never should anyone be asked to hire a handicapped person, veteran or otherwise, solely on the basis of the handicap. It's a business proposition, based on the premise that handicapped men and women should be given an equal opportunity for employment, providing they have capabilities and training needed for proper performance of the particular position.



*Marion C. Walton, 23, had both hands severed by a mechanical corn picker. The Illinois Division of Vocational Rehabilitation provided surgical care and later, two artificial arms. He is now salesman for a farm supply company.*

Maudlin sentimentality and crocodile tears have no place here. Actually, they aren't even needed, for the statistics show conclusively that the impaired men and women who went into business and industry during the war turned out an amazing record of safety, attendance, production and dependability. Proper placement, combined with proper training, is the alpha and omega of today's program for employing the handicapped.

During the war when the manpower available was terribly short we had many calls for workers at our Institute. As a result of successful placement, there are today hundreds of blind and partially blinded people happily and gainfully employed and doing an equal or better job than their fellow able-bodied workers.

A friend of mine was somewhat shocked when I suggested he employ a blind stenographer at his New York Stock Exchange Office. Not only did she turn out as good work as her predecessor, but she improved the whole tone of my friend's office, raising morale by her very cheerful presence.

I persuaded a radio manufacturer to employ some blind boys in mica splitting and radio repair work. He agreed and soon had more than 20 blind workers. As a result, he increased production, raised his profits and today is a firm booster for hiring the handicapped.

It is almost as easy as it sounds. In fact, with today's Federal and State offices of the Veterans Administration, the Employment Services and the Vocational Rehabilitation agencies scattered throughout our communities, sometimes a mere

(*Continued on page 56*)

# Housewives For The Nation

*Salvage workers in Paddington during regional drive.*

Under the leadership of the Dowager Marchioness of Reading, the women of Great Britain were organized into the Women's Voluntary Services during the war years. They continue their responsibilities to meet post-war needs. Lady Reading writes the story of these "maids - of - all - work" for the GENERAL FEDERATION CLUBWOMAN. She has also furnished to the GFWC approved lists of names of British families to whom parcels and letters may be sent.

In June 1948 the organisation known in Great Britain as Women's Voluntary Services will have been in existence for ten years. It was started as an auxiliary to the Air Raid Precaution Services, grew during the war into an essential and ubiquitous part of the nation's bomb-ridden fight for life, was asked by the British Government in 1945 to continue for a possible two years, and has now been requested to carry on for an indefinite period.

By and large, the business of W. V.S., both during and since the war, has been to accomplish on a national scale those things which any woman would try to do for her family and neighbours in times of danger or difficulty. Clothing, feeding and housing the homeless and dispossessed; taking children to places of safety and tending them in their parents' absence; caring for the old and friendless; providing anything from canteens to camouflage nets for the army; salvaging waste-paper, rags and bones — these activities, and many others in which W.V.S. have been engaged, are, in essence, merely the cooking, sweeping, mending and "fixing" to which every housewife is accustomed, but, as carried out by over a million women, they make an appreciable contribution to the life of the community.

*Schoolboys help unload their hot lunches.*

In any country, and particularly in time of war, or the days of stress and shortage which follow, there will always be many who suffer hardships too great to be overcome by their own efforts, or those of their neighbours, and I believe an immense value can be placed on a nation-wide organisation to which those in difficulty can apply, particularly if that organisation, while able to put the whole of official machinery in motion, is determined to show humanity, sympathy and commonsense in its dealings with each individual it is privileged to help.

The membership of W.V.S. is composed, almost entirely, of women who have their own homes to run and their own families to care for, but who are willing to give at least some of their leisure time to working for the welfare of their country as a whole. As members of W.V.S. they have the opportunity of learning where and in what direction this help is most urgently required, and of being able to give it, backed, if need be, by resources far greater than the individual or the local community can command.

Many of the jobs now being undertaken by W.V.S. are long-term efforts to overcome the shortages which today bedevil the life of every British family. They run clothing exchanges where the garments of growing children can be swapped for larger sizes, and at no loss to the swapper's cash or clothing coupons; during the glut of the summer months they can fruit and vegetables for those who, owing to age or infirmity or lack of facilities, are unable to can for themselves; they produce hundreds of thousands of meat pies for rural workers, who, unlike their city cousins, cannot get restaurant meals off the ration; they cover an immense mileage driving patients to and from hospital for treatment; they take hot meals to invalids and old people living alone; they assist in the distribution of ration-books; in fact they do any job which will help to stretch their country's scanty resources to the utmost, or which will fill in some of the gaps in Britain's inadequate labour force.

In emergencies W.V.S. is always available, whether it is, perhaps, to combat the mud, mess and misery produced by winter floods, or to make life bearable for a sudden in-

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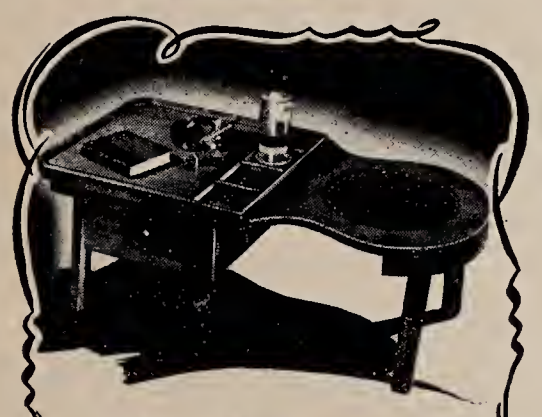

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## EMPLOYABLE

(*Continued from page* 11)

phone call will result in placement of a handicapped man or woman in a job for which they have necessary experience.

Seventeen thousand women's clubs is a most significant figure. If each club found one job for a disabled veteran or civilian, that would mean you would have employed one whole combat division of wounded. And a great many wounds were received as a result of aggressive and forceful action on the part of our soldiers, sailors, Marines and Coast Guardsmen. Those who march in the Purple Heart Parade are among the leaders, only today some of them can no longer march. But they march in their hearts when they are given an opportunity to make their own way and to pay their own way, through gainful employment.

If I learned anything during the years I spent in the Navy working for Admiral Ross T. McIntire, the wartime Surgeon General, it was that as a man's job opportunities improved so also did his physical and mental restoration. Those boys who knew they had the skills and training to go back into employment minus eyes, legs, arms or suffering from some perhaps less dramatic but equally crippling injury, were the ones who improved quickest, all other things being equal.

Miss Dorothy Stratton, wartime Director of the Spars and former Purdue Dean of Women, once squared her shoulders and told a radio audience that the woman who is physically handicapped "desires passionately to make her own way." Miss Stratton said that, "given training and careful placement she can do a job well. She does not ask for sympathy, she asks only for a chance.

The General Federation of Women's Clubs has joined the President's Committee on National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week in driving home to America a year-round program of public information and education on this subject. It is helping, in the person of Mrs. J. L. Blair Buck, to lend its influence at community level to such basic matters as employment and rehabilitation of people—men and women.

As Chairman of the Awards of Merit Committee, Mrs. Buck is re-


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## OUR SOIL

(*Continued from page* 15)

trition are lost, along with the microscopic organisms that help make land productive. Much more remains to be learned about this vital subject, but already experiments have been extended to the point where we must grant that, no matter how much we eat, our good health depends on the fertility of the soil.

The purposes of our national soil conservation program are to prevent further decline in our land's productivity, to restore badly damaged land to a point where it will produce timber or pasture, to increase per-acre yields safely, and to insure plentiful food, fiber, and oil crops in the future. Our important problem is to accelerate soil conservation at once, before we lose more valuable land we cannot afford to lose.

Can we catch up with, and pass, this specter of soil erosion that is haunting much of our over-worked land, while at the same time we use our land to meet enormous demands to feed hungry people in many parts of the world? I believe we can do it, in the next few years, if our farmers' soil conservation program is given strong support by the American people as an essential phase of future security and well being of the nation.

Our urgent problem, of course, is to get conservation farming methods in use, especially on those of our lands that are being damaged at a critically rapid rate. But the whole broad problem goes deeper than that. We must change our way of thinking about the land we live from, and its relation to people the world over. Many other countries have started soil conservation work in the last few years; some important food-producing countries now have conservation programs similar to ours in the United States. They look to us for guidance, send their agricultural scientists to us for training in soil conservation, and have high hopes for betterment of their people's welfare through soil conservation.

International peace and security rests in no small measure on the successful outcome of these efforts to keep the world's remaining supply of food-producing land permanently productive.

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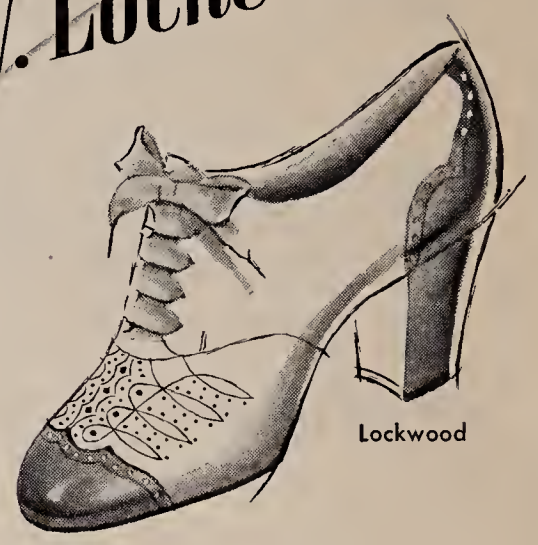

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sponsible for setting up standards of performance and later selecting meritorious employers for receipt of President's Committee awards for outstanding service in the employment of impaired men and women in a particular community.

And this is but one attack on the problem. Local clubs can devote programs to the subject, fascinating and gripping as it is, and call upon talented speakers of public or private agencies to tell the story of what is being done and what more needs to be done with their cooperation. Clubs could sponsor essay contests, participate in expositions or institutes, and appoint a Handicapped Committee to investigate in what field a particular club could make its greatest contribution.

It isn't difficult. But it does take some planning and some thinking. I know that our women's clubs have long since proven their abilities to do this.

Dorothy Stratton brought home the message with pile driver force when she said with emotion: "It is an understatement to say that most persons have never in the whole course of their lives given as much as one hour's thought to the problems of the handicapped in our society."

Ours is a voice calling for that "one hour," confident that many more will follow, once the first is profitably spent.

## ALASKA TOGS

Mrs. Doris Barnes, Wrangell, Alaska, who is chairman of the committee on arrangements for the visit of clubwomen to Alaska, sends advice about "what to bring." She heads the list with low-heeled walking shoes, one or two suits with blouses, sunglasses, a warm topcoat, scarf to protect hair from sea breezes, a light raincoat, rubbers, and a rain cap in lieu of an umbrella. No long dress is needed, for the entertainment will be informal. She hints at a picnic by a glacier, a Days of '98 celebration, and an informal reception at midnight with a cup of coffee and an Alaska shrimp salad before you return to the ship. "We are so happy for the opportunity of meeting you. You will be a great inspiration to us, bringing as you do that touch of the Outside and the message the General Federation has for all women.


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## CHILD WORKERS

*(Continued from page 6)*

16-year minimum age for the employment of girls at any time but no minimum for boys.

To be effective in any program for child labor, it is essential to know the state and federal child labor laws. Such codes are useless without enforcement and it is therefore important to provide for this and to see that enforcement is vital. Clubwomen should work for a really helpful law, a fool-proof permit system, spread of knowledge even to children themselves, proper inspection, systematic follow-up and prosecution when necessary.

With plans and suggestions such as those just outlined, the 3,000,000 working children of the United States of America will be helped to the adequate care needed for physical and mental health, time for skills, aptitudes, guidance for creative effort, understanding of ways to live together in peace and happiness. Our democracy is dependent upon the kind of men and women children become. Let us control child labor lest in the greedy scramble for worldly goods, we lose our *real* wealth, the souls of America's children.

What is your state doing about it?

*(The author is indebted to pamphlets and charts issued by the United States Department of Labor and to studies by the National Child Labor Committee, Eduard Lindemann, Chairman.)*

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